(a) whether the Central Government have appointed any Committee to find out the possibility of using coir products for constructing border roads;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any report has been submitted so far in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) No such Committee has been formed. However, a trial for use of Coir geo-textile on an embankment under construction, near Silchar on NH 53, under Project Pushpak of Border Roads Organisation, is proposed to be conducted jointly by Coir Board and BRO. The performance of Coir geo-textile in stabilizing the slope during the trial will be studied by both the parties. The modalities are being worked out jointly by Coir Board and Border Roads Organisation.

Induction of AWACS

5487. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether IAF propose to purchase/obtain on lease two Russian A-50 Airborne Early Warning and Control Systems (AWACS); and

(b) if so, by when they are likely to be inducted?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The IAF has no plans to purchase or obtain two Russian AWACS on lease. However, one Russian AWACS A-50 aircraft was recently taken on lease for 30 days from Russia for demonstrations to provide hands on experience to IAF operators.

Employment of Retired Defence Personnel

5488. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large percentage of retired defence personnel are without employment after their retirement from the defence forces;

(b) whether Government have done any survey on how many retired and able defence personnel want to work and are unemployed;

(c) to what extent Government Have failed to evolve adequate opportunities to rehabilitate retired'personnel in some form of gainful employment;

(d) whether a review will be done and future steps taken to ensure that retired personnel of all- ranks are not abandoned; and

(e) the details of the steps proposed?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (e) As per available information, 3,09,118 ex-Servicemen were registered as on 31.12.1999 with various Zila Sainik Boards for re-employment assistance.

It has not been possible to provide re-employment to all eligible ex-Servicemen in the Government sector because of shrinking job opportunities. Many ex-Servicemen also do not want to take up jobs away from their homes as they wish to live with their families in their native villages/towns. In order lo help them to take up self-employment ventures, they are given training in various trades/vocations before their release from service. There are also schemes to provide them financial assistance to set up small and village industries.

Compensation for properties in Kashmir

5489. SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA:
DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleised to state:

(a) whether more than 600 civilians whose properties were taken over by the Army and Rashtriya Rifles for setting up posts for counter insurgency operations in Kashmir were approved by Delhi High Court for compensation;

(b) if so, the reasons for not paying up rent to them by the Army or the State Government to avoid litigation; and

(c) the early efforts proposed to resolve the dispute over liability of making the payment to the owners to gain confidence of the local people?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) A Public Interest Litigation petition has been filed before the Delhi High Court in this regard.

(b) and (c) Normally, it is the responsibility of the concerned State Government to pay the rentals in respect of private properties occupied by security forces on counter insurgency operation in the State. However, after due consideration of the circumstances, Ministry of Defence h.is decided to pay the rentals for all such properties occupied by the Army and Rashtriya